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"NO MORE SILENCE"
by CRAY SNEED

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JAMES TAGUE
Eyewitness

"I called my father and told him that Kennedy had been killed. He said, `Jim, I'm watching the TV and they said he's still alive.' I told him, `Dad, believe me, he's dead because I was there.'..."

Originally from Indiana, James Tague moved to the Dallas area in 1956 while in the Air Force, married a Texas girl, and later fathered five children. By 1960 he was employed in the automobile business. He is sometimes referred to by some assassination researchers as "the other victim."

I was working for Chuck Hinton Dodge on Lemmon Avenue in Dallas and was running late taking a friend to lunch around noon. At that point, I drove down Stemmons, turned to go east on Commerce and was stopped at the Triple Underpass. I realized that the Kennedy motorcade was coming through that area and, due to the fact that traffic came to a momentary stop in the left lane where I was, I stepped out of my car with the nose of the car sticking out of the east side of the underpass just seconds before the motorcade turned the corner in front of the School Book Depository. So I was standing to the front of the car on the cement where it narrows to go under the Triple Underpass between Main and Commerce Streets.

I could see the car turn left onto Elm Street then I heard three shots. When I heard the first shot, I thought somebody had thrown a firecracker and was standing there wondering what had

Page 109

happened. Then I heard another sound which was a little different. The third shot sounded the same as the second. At that point, I realized that they were possibly gunshots, so I ducked behind the concrete support and peeked out just as the Presidential limousine was passing into the Triple Underpass. In hindsight it was already over at that time.

I could not honestly tell from where the shots had originated, but the first shot I found the most interesting. A number of people described that shot as a firecracker, and it was different from the next two.

After the limousine had passed, one policeman stopped his motorcycle, drew his gun and ran up the grassy knoll while another came running. Other than a few people running for whatever reason, either toward the grassy knoll or in other directions, many people were just standing there, stunned. Veteran policemen were not reacting.

While I was standing there watching this, a man in a suit, who later identified himself as Deputy Sheriff Buddy Walthers, ran up and said, "What happened?" I told him that I didn't know, so we then walked over to the curb next to the grassy knoll on the north side of Elm where a motorcycle policeman had stopped and where three to five people were standing around. One of the men was very anguished and said his head had exploded.

When the policeman asked him who, he said, "The President's!" That was the first that Mr. Walthers and I even knew that somebody had shot at the President.

At that point, Mr. Walthers looked at me and said, "You've got blood on your cheek!" So I reached up and felt a couple of drops of blood. That was the first time that I recalled that there'd been something that had stung me, much like a sweat bee sting. So he said, "Let's go back over to where you were standing." Before we could cross Main Street we saw the mark on the curb from across the street. It appeared that a shot had hit the curb right at my feet. I don't know the exact measurements but it was on the rounded edge of the curb on the south edge of Main Street about ten to twelve feet out from the Triple Underpass.

According to the photographs and police tapes I probably stayed in the area a little over seven minutes. In fact the motorcycle policeman called in: "I have one more possibly with

minor injuries." I was then told to go down to Homicide and give them a statement, which I did.

I think I got to police headquarters about 1:15 because I stopped and called the person I was to have had the luncheon engagement with and also called my father and told him that Kennedy had been killed. He said, "Jim, I'm watching the TV and they said he's still alive."

I told him, "Dad, believe me, he's dead because I was there!"

I found out years later by accident that the detective that I gave the statement to in Homicide at police headquarters was Gus Rose. I was listening to the radio one day and they were interviewing him on his retirement from the Dallas Police Department. He was asked if he remembered interviewing Oswald and he said, "Yeah, I remember very distinctly. I was sitting in my office taking a statement from a man that had a minor injury at the time of the assassination." At that time I hadn't known his name. In fact I often wondered whatever happened to that statement because it never showed up anywhere later.

In any case, while I was in Gus Rose's office giving him a statement, there was a commotion to our right as Oswald was brought in. Matter of fact, they put him in the office next to the one we were in. Mr. Rose told me, "That's the guy that shot the policeman over in Oak Cliff."

I said, "I didn't know there'd been a policeman shot."

He responded, "Yeah, killed him!" That was the extent of the conversation. There was no connection to the President.

I don't recall how long I was at police headquarters, but I left three or four minutes after they brought Oswald in. From there I went back to work. Most businesses in Dallas had ground to a halt by that time. Further into the afternoon it just stopped. I don't remember exactly but I think our business, which was normally open till 9:00 P.M., closed at 5:00. At that point I went home, took out a spiral notebook and started writing down a lot of feelings I had and what I recalled happening. The only thing on TV, of course, was the assassination.

Immediately after the assassination there was talk about three shots which was the same number I heard and that all three had hit Kennedy and Connally. All three shots were accounted for. Well, I knew that our great government, the FBI, the Secret Service, they're smart and they were going to find out the truth about

what really happened. They'd dig in and be coming around to me to find out about this one shot which had missed and hit the curb near me. Later I told friends, "Hey, I was there and that one shot missed."

These people replied, "No, no, you're wrong, Jim."

After a couple of weeks with this persisting in the papers, I picked up the phone, called the FBI and said, "Hey, there was one shot that missed!"

Of course they came out and interviewed me and started asking questions. One of them asked right off, "Do you know Jack Ruby?"

I said, "Well, I've met him." So he started digging in on that then learned that my roommate, who was a guitar player, was dating a dancer who worked for Jack Ruby. He really got heavy into that.

Into the spring of the next year, the papers were saying that the Warren Commission was wrapping up its findings about three shots: two that hit Kennedy, and one that hit Connally. I was distressed and concerned about my credibility. Whenever I mentioned this thing, I was told, "You're crazy!"

One day I was talking to a man I knew in the service department at my place of business and mentioned, "You know, the photographer of *The Dallas Morning News* took the picture; there was a deputy sheriff who was there also and he brought some other police officers; I gave a statement to the Dallas Police Department and another to the FBI and this is wrong!" So he went to a news reporter who worked for the *Dallas Times Herald*, and since the *Times Herald* was only five to ten minutes away, it wasn't an hour till a young reporter named Jim Lehrer of the later MacNeil-Lehrer Report called and said he'd like to talk to me. I told him, "Hey, I'm not seeking publicity. Don't use my name, but I think this is what happened. I know I'm not crazy!" That was maybe 10:30 or 11:00 in the morning.

About noon he called back and said, "Jim, I put this on the wire service and they're calling me from all over the country. Matter of fact I've had to give them your name."

I replied, "That's fine. Of course it's not in the local paper."

So it wasn't long after that that all of a sudden it was learned that the Warren Commission was going to be reconvened. At that time, I was called for the first time to give my testimony to

Wesley Liebler of the Warren Commission. Of course I got the testimony of the photographer, Buddy Walthers, and other people who corroborated that there had been a shot which had missed. Lo and behold, all of a sudden the newspapers came out with a new theory that two shots hit in the car and one of the bullets went completely through Kennedy, the one that also did all the damage to Connally. Since all of this had become a personal thing to me, I felt vindicated.

I became very interested in this for years. At the time the Warren Commission amassed its findings, I had to accept what they concluded since I didn't know. But as I got deeper into it, by filing under the Freedom of Information Act to get information from the FBI, Secret Service, and CIA, I did not accept its findings.

If we go back into history, recall that we almost had a Warren Commission Report which would have said that all three bullets hit Kennedy and Connally. Of the many mistakes, at least that mistake was corrected. But many others were never corrected.

I had the good fortune of riding to the airport with one of the Warren Commission lawyers and asked him, "How did you happen to get selected?" This was a brilliant man and a tremendously brilliant lawyer.

He said, "Well, the government sent out letters to the top law schools in the country asking if they'd recommend the previous year's top graduates. Due to the fact that I had graduated at the top of my class and within six months of graduating was already a partner in a law firm, my professor nominated me, and I was one of seven chosen."

I asked him, "Is that how all the investigators were picked?" When he responded, yes, I further asked, "You had no investigative experience before?"

"Well, we were at the top of our class," he said. Now I'm not discrediting those lawyers at the top of their classes, but these were not seasoned trial lawyers or investigators. You can be good, but if you don't have the experience it can cause a problem.

In 1963 J. Edgar Hoover ran the FBI. Some honest retired FBI agents will tell you that fifty percent or more of their time was spent making things happen the way J. Edgar Hoover wanted them to happen. An agent would go out in the field and investigate something but would not write up his report. Instead,

he turned it over to another who was a professional in writing up flowery reports that he knew would sound and read like J. Edgar Hoover wanted. Within three days of the assassination, Hoover wrote out a memorandum to President Johnson about what had happened. That was the direction the Warren Commission received. In a secret meeting in January 1964, one of the Warren Commission members said, "They don't need us. We're going to have to find it this way. The FBI will not give us any help, so we might as well fold up and go home." That was the atmosphere.

God, we all loved J. Edgar, but he had gotten too old for the job and too set in his ways. Everybody feared him. I've got a copy of a report that after this newspaper article appeared, the FBI interviewed the writer, Jim Lehrer. The report was most negative. It took what I had to say and turned it around with a different meaning which was very negative.

In my research, I have become convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald was involved but that he had some people helping him. The problem was in New Orleans. Probably the CIA had hired Oswald as an agent or an operative to do a certain job for them: namely, go burglarize an armory with some other people. He might have been told, "You do this, Lee. You'll have all the people you'll need and all the doors will open. We're going to give the guns and ammunition to the anti-Castro people. We can't just directly give them to them because it would appear too obvious, but we can say that they were stolen and your job is to pretend that you are stealing them." So this little group worked for the CIA as operatives. When the Bay of Pigs disaster happened, I think conversation in the group changed from Castro being the bad guy to Kennedy had let them down. Thus the plot to kill Kennedy was hatched in New Orleans which was described in Harold Weisberg's book, *Oswald in New Orleans*.

I think there is good evidence to indicate that the original plot was to have Kennedy assassinated in Atlanta, but the FBI became aware that a weapon was supposed to have been taken up to an office building and they changed plans. Kennedy never went to Atlanta, but lo and behold, Oswald was on the parade route here in Dallas.

If you go back to Dealey Plaza at 12:30 and get the photographs and police tapes, there was really no action taken on the School Book Depository for seven minutes. True, there were

a couple of policemen who said they rushed in, which looks good on a sergeant's report, but it didn't happen that way. In those seven minutes, I think Oswald may have assisted in letting people into the building by saying they worked there or whatever. During that time, they could have moved an army in and out of the Texas School Book Depository.

In viewing the Zapruder film, there's overwhelming evidence that there was a frontal shot. They keep saying that there was possibly a neurological reaction, but if you view the film in slow motion, the Groden enhancement, the power of that shot even throws the body backward. The car was barely moving, so it wasn't from the acceleration, and I've never found anybody yet that has seen a kill of an animal where they fall toward the shot. As a result, there very definitely had to have been a shot from the grassy knoll.

After over thirty years, James Tague is still employed in the automobile business and maintains an interest in the research on the Kennedy assassination.